<u>WE CLAIM:</u>

1.   In a client computer in communication with a server computer over a network, a method of installing software at the client computer from the server computer over the network, the method comprising:

5   responsive to a request generated at the client computer for installing the software, retrieving by the client computer an executable file from the server computer, the executable file comprising the software and an installation program for installing the software;

further responsive to the request, executing the executable file at the client

10   computer; and

responsive to the execution of the executable file at the client computer, automatically starting the installation program to install the software on the client computer.

15   2.   The method of claim 1 wherein the request at the client computer comprises an indication by a user at the client computer that the software is desired.

3.   The method of claim 1 wherein the request at the client computer comprises an indication by a user at the client computer that the software is to be

20   downloaded.

4.   The method of claim 1 wherein the installation program comprises an installation utility.

25   5.   The method of claim 4 wherein the installation program further comprises an installation information file.

6.   The method of claim 1 wherein the executable file further comprises a self-extractor.

30

7.   The method of claim 6 further comprising:

further responsive to the request, invoking the self-extractor to extract the
software and the installation program from the file.

8.   The method of claim 7 wherein the executable file further comprises a
5   digital signature, the method further comprising:

further responsive to the request, verifying the digital signature before installing
the software.

9.   The method of claim 1 wherein the executable file further comprises a
10   digital signature.

10.   The method of claim 9 further comprising:

further responsive to the request, verifying the digital signature before installing
the software.

15

11.   The method of claim 1 wherein the event at the client computer
comprises a selection by a user at the client computer via an Internet browser of
software to be downloaded and installed.

20   12.   The method of claim 1 wherein the starting is initiated without further
user input.

13.   A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions
for performing the following in a client computer in communication with a server
computer over a network to install software at the client computer from the server
25   computer over the network:

responsive to a request generated at the client computer for installing the
software, retrieving by the client computer an executable file from the server computer,
the executable file comprising the software and an installation program for installing the
software;

30   further responsive to the request, executing the executable file at the client
computer; and

responsive to the execution of the executable file at the client computer, automatically starting the installation program to install the software on the client computer.

5   14.   In a client computer in communication with a server computer over a network, a method of installing software at the client computer from the server computer over the network, the method comprising:

responsive to a request generated at the client computer for installing the software, retrieving by the client computer an executable file from the server computer,

10   the executable file comprising the software and an installation program for installing the software;

further responsive to the request, executing the executable file at the client computer; and

responsive to the execution of the executable file at the client computer, starting

15   the installation program to install the software on the client computer without further user input.

15.   In a client computer in communication with a server computer via a network, a method of installing software at the client computer, the method comprising:
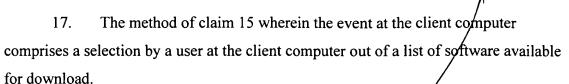
20   responsive to an event detected at the client computer, retrieving to the client computer an executable file from the server computer, wherein the executable file comprises the software and an installation program for installing the software;

further responsive to the event detected at the client computer, opening the executable file at the client computer; and

25   responsive to said opening the executable file, automatically starting the installation program to install the software on the client computer.

16.   The method of claim 15 wherein the event at the client computer comprises an indication by a user at the client computer that the software is to be

30   downloaded.

17.   The method of claim 15 wherein the event at the client computer comprises a selection by a user at the client computer out of a list of software available for download.

5   18.   The method of claim 15 wherein the event at the client computer comprises a selection by a user via a network browser.

19.   The method of claim 15 further comprising:

responsive to said opening the executable file, automatically extracting the
10   installation program before executing the installation program.

20.   A method for automatically installing software at a computer, the method comprising:

responsive to a user request at the computer indicating the software is desired,
15   retrieving an executable file to the computer, wherein the executable file comprises the desired software and an installation utility for installing the software; and

after retrieving the executable file to the computer, automatically starting the installation utility to install the desired software.

20   21.   The method of claim 20 wherein the executable file further comprises an extraction utility operable to extract the desired software from the executable file, the method further comprising:
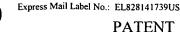
after retrieving the executable file to the computer, automatically invoking the extraction utility to extract the desired software from the executable file.
25

22.   The method of claim 20 wherein the executable file further comprises an extraction utility operable to extract the installation utility from the executable file, the method further comprising:

after retrieving the executable file to the computer, automatically invoking the
30   extraction utility to extract the installation utility from the executable file.

23.   In a receiving computer in communication with a sending computer over a network, a method of installing software at the receiving computer from the sending computer over the network, the method comprising:

     responsive to a request generated at the receiving computer for installing the

5   software, retrieving by the receiving computer an executable file from the sending computer, the executable file comprising the software, an extractor, and an installer for installing the software;

     further responsive to the request, automatically invoking the extractor to extract the installer and the software from the executable file at the receiving computer; and

10   further responsive to the request, automatically starting the extracted installer to install the extracted software on the receiving computer.

24.   The method of claim 23 wherein the installer comprises an installation program.

15

25.   The method of claim 23 wherein the extractor comprises an extracting program.

26.   The method of claim 23 wherein the starting is performed without further

20   user input.

27.   In a computer, a method for installing software on the computer, the method comprising:

     responsive to a request generated at the computer, retrieving to the computer a

25   signed self-extracting distribution file, wherein the signed self-extracting distribution file comprises the software, a digital signature, an extractor, and an installer;

     further responsive to the request generated at the computer, automatically verifying the digital signature;

     further responsive to the request generated at the computer, automatically

30   executing the extractor to extract the installer and the software form the self-extracting distribution file; and

further responsive to the request generated at the computer, automatically

invoking the extracted installer to install the extracted software on the computer.

28.   A method of providing a file for installing desired software at a remote

5   computer, the method comprising:

placing the desired software in the file;

placing instructions for installing the software in the file;

placing instructions for automatically invoking the instructions for installing the

software in the file; and

10   placing the file in a location accessible to the remote computer via a computer

network;

whereby, when the file is retrieved and opened by the remote computer, the

instructions for installing the software are automatically invoked to install the desired

software.

15

29.   The method of claim 28 further comprising:

over the computer network, providing to the remote computer a reference to the

location accessible to the remote computer via the computer network.

20   30.   A computer-readable storage medium having a computer-executable

distribution file for distributing software to a computer and installing the software on

the computer upon execution of the distribution file, the distribution file comprising:

software installable at the computer;

an installation program co-resident in the distribution file with the software, the

25   installation program operable to install the software; and

executable installation program starting instructions arranged within the

distribution file to be automatically executed responsive to execution of the distribution

file, the installation program starting instructions operable to start the installation

program to install the software.

30

31.   The computer-readable storage medium of claim 30 wherein the

computer-executable distribution file is an executable program.

32. A computer-readable software program carrier medium having carried thereon a computer-executable distribution file for distributing software to a computer

5 and installing the software on the computer upon execution of the distribution file, the distribution file comprising:

software installable at the computer;

an installation program co-resident in the distribution file with the software, the installation program operable to install the software; and

10 executable installation program starting instructions arranged within the distribution file to be automatically executed responsive to execution of the distribution file, the installation program starting instructions operable to start the installation program to install the software.

15 33. A computer-readable storage medium having a computer-executable distribution file for distributing and installing software on a computer upon execution of the distribution file, the distribution file comprising:

software installable at the computer;

an installation program co-resident in the distribution file with the software, the

20 installation program operable to install the software; and

executable installation program starting instructions arranged within the distribution file to be automatically executed responsive to execution of the distribution file, the installation program starting instructions operable to start the installation program to install the software.

25

34. A computer-readable storage medium having a distribution file for distributing and installing software on a computer, the distribution file comprising:

software installable at the computer;

an installer co-resident in the distribution file with the software, the installer

30 operable to install the software;

an extractor co-resident in the distribution file with the software, the extractor operable

to extract the software and the installer from the distribution file and automatically

invoked upon receipt of the distribution file; and

installer starting instructions arranged within the distribution file to be

automatically executed upon completion of extraction of the software and the installer,

5   the installer starting instructions operable to start the installer to install the software.

35.   A computer-readable storage medium having a computer-executable

distribution file for distributing and installing software on a computer upon execution of

the distribution file, the distribution file comprising:

10   software installable at the computer;

a set of installation instructions co-resident in the distribution file with the

software, the installation instructions operable to direct installation of the software; and

executable installation program starting instructions arranged within the

distribution file to be automatically executed responsive to execution of the distribution

15   file, the installation program starting instructions operable to start the installation

instructions to direct installation of the software.

36.   In a client computer in communication with a remote computer over a

network, a software system for installing software on the client computer, the system

20   comprising:

means for accepting an indication from a user that selected software is to be

installed on the client computer;

responsive to the means for accepting, means for downloading a software

distribution file to the client computer, wherein the software distribution file comprises

25   the selected software and an installation program for installing the selected software,

wherein the software distribution file further comprises means for initiating the

installation program upon activation of the software distribution file; and

means for activating the distribution file to install the selected software.

30   37.   In a server computer in communication with a remote computer over a

network, a software system for installing software on the remote computer, the system

comprising:

means for accepting an indication from a user at the remote computer that selected software is to be installed on the remote computer;

responsive to the means for accepting, means for uploading a software

5   distribution file to the remote computer, wherein the software distribution file comprises the selected software and an installation program for installing the selected software, wherein the software distribution file further comprises means for initiating the installation program upon activation of the software distribution file; and

means to indicate the distribution file is to be activated to install the selected

10   software.

38.   A computer-readable storage medium having a computer-executable distribution file for distributing and installing software on a computer upon execution of the distribution file, the distribution file comprising:

15   software installable at the computer;

installation means co-resident in the distribution file with the software, the installation means operable to install the software; and

executable installation starting means arranged within the distribution file to be automatically executed responsive to execution of the distribution file, the installation-

20   starting means operable to start the installation means to install the software.

add a 1
add b 2